

TO SPECIFY LAWS HE WANTS ENACTED

President Will Give Congress Views on Transportation Problem After Holidays.

IS STUDYING THE SUBJECT

President Wilson will send a message to Congress recommending enactment of legislation to meet the transportation situation immediately after the holiday recess. Until this has been received the President requested that the Senate interstate commerce committee withhold making any investigation, as provided for under the Cummins resolution, until the recommendations of the Interstate Commerce Commission, which urged the unification of the railroads of the country.

Request Made at Conference.

This request, it was authoritatively learned today, was made at the conference yesterday between President Wilson and Chairman Newlands of the committee. The President, it is understood, is engaged in a careful study of the entire railroad situation, both regarding the financial part of it and also the extent of his legal powers. He is said, however, not to have reached any definite conclusions so far as to what recommendations he will make.

Senate Committee in Session.

The Senate interstate commerce committee held an executive session today at which plans for the forthcoming investigation were to have been made and a date fixed for beginning hearings. At the close of nearly three hours' session Chairman Newlands announced that a subcommittee consisting of himself and Senators Pomeroy, Sutherland, Cummins and Kellogg had been appointed to formulate and submit to the interstate commerce commission and to the railroad executives a request for statistical and other information relating to the railroad situation. This subcommittee will report next Wednesday.

Will Study All Phases.

It is understood that when this information is received the committee will devote practically the entire remainder of the holiday recess to becoming familiar with the financial and physical conditions of the carriers, so that when the President's message is received immediate consideration can be given to the necessary legislation urged by the President, prepared for introduction into Congress.

FORTY WORKMEN ROBBED BY FIVE ARMED NEGROES

ALTON, Ill., December 21.—Forty white workmen at the plant of the Federal Lead Company here were held up and robbed by five armed negroes as they were leaving work this morning.

The men were paid yesterday and said that they had been robbed of sums ranging from 50 cents to \$40.

As the white workmen were going single file down a narrow pathway leading from the gate of the plant they were halted by the negroes. As each man rounded a curve the negroes pointed revolvers at him and ordered him to stand against a wall, out of sight of the approaching men. In this way forty were lined up.

The negro workman was permitted to pass unmolested.

URGENT MUNITION DIRECTOR

Government Officials Feel Pressure Is Strong to Follow the System of Allies.

Pressure for the appointment of a minister of munitions is stronger just now than it ever has been before, in the opinion of officials of the government, and men in close contact with the administration have been giving considerable thought to the proposal.

Some of them have gone over carefully the English plan in this respect, and it is considered likely that if one is named here that the allied plan will be followed.

The British ministry of munitions does not include the handling of food and clothing, but does deal with the purchases of shot, shell, guns and all material relating to ordnance supplies.

If such a minister were appointed here to have in charge the handling of food and the functions now held by the war industries board of the Council of National Defense, as well as the purchasing functions of the heads of the quartermaster and ordnance heads of the Army and the corresponding officials in the Navy.

NO LINE ON BERLIN OFFER

Secretary Lansing Says U. S. Attitude Toward Peace Negotiations Is Unchanged.

Secretary Lansing said today that no information of the terms of Germany's expected "Christmas peace" offer has reached the State Department and that the attitude of the United States toward a peace negotiation was unchanged.

ABIG PAID WAR, BIG BOUT CLOTHING

War Department, Gen. Sharpe Declares, Did Not Wait for Appropriation.

ORDERED FOR MILLION

Without waiting for congressional appropriations, the War Department authorized orders for clothing equipment for 1,000,000 troops before the United States went to war, it was brought out today in the testimony of Q. M. Gen. Henry G. Sharpe before the Senate military committee.

The committee investigating the supplying of troops went particularly into the causes for the shortage in clothing.

Secretary Baker, Gen. Sharpe said, authorized orders for clothing and other supplies for the million men just before the war declaration and in June approved orders to equip another half million.

The only complaints of supply shortage received by the department have been in respect to clothing, Gen. Sharpe said.

Secretary Gave Approval.

In an introductory statement, dealing with the Mexican border mobilization, Gen. Sharpe said the ordnance equipment ordered with Secretary Baker's approval was the regulation thirty days' supply, including clothing, hats, shoes, tentage and animals. The supply, he explained, was expected to last two or three months.

"In February," he said, "anticipating probable trouble, we ordered full equipment, at war strength, for the Regular Army of 160,000 men, and late in April, 1917, when the mobilization was imminent, the Secretary authorized order for equipment for 500,000 more men."

Before war broke out, I had authority for another 500,000," he said.

Ordered Without Funds.

These orders, he explained, were authorized without funds and in anticipation of congressional appropriations.

Senator McKellar inquired whether the Council of National Defense had not, in effect, taken over virtually all work in connection with placing orders for clothing. Gen. Sharpe replied that all contracts and prices were subject to the department's final approval and that the Council of National Defense assisted in preliminary negotiations.

Gen. Sharpe cited Secretary Baker's order of April 22 giving contractual jurisdiction to the council.

"Then afterward you didn't have actual jurisdiction," he asked. "Yes, we did," he replied, "they made by the council and then all you did was to sign the orders," he made," asked Senator McKellar.

Statement Not Correct.

Gen. Sharpe said that statement was not correct and that the department exercised much supervision of the contracts.

Senator Frelinghuysen took up the question of quality of the American Army clothing.

"Isn't it 14 per cent less in weight than the British uniform?" he asked. "Isn't it 14 per cent less in weight than the British uniform?" he asked. "Isn't it 14 per cent less in weight than the British uniform?" he asked.

O. K. for Trenches.

"No," said Gen. Sharpe. "We asked Gen. Pershing if any changes were needed in the uniform for trench work. He has suggested only that spiral puttees be substituted for trench work only, and a change in the hat and shoe lengthened the gloves. He says the undergarments are all right. The overgarments have been shortened slightly to allow more free action. And slickers have been substituted for ponchos."

Knows of No Interference.

"Have you ever been interfered with by the council of defense or other interested parties in making contracts?" asked Senator Frelinghuysen.

"Not to my knowledge," the quartermaster general replied.

In further inquiries into the contract co-operation of the council of national defense, Gen. Sharpe insisted that the department has no making and approving contracts is not merely formal. He said that the council selects manufacturers and makes prices, but said a department officer, Col. Harry J. Hirsch, sits with the council in negotiating contracts.

"Wasn't it necessary to call in these civilian advisers in order to get production of material?" he asked.

"In my opinion, it was," said Gen. Sharpe, "insisting emphatically that an organization similar to the council is absolutely necessary, but recommended that it be modified along the British system."

Shortages Due to Late Deliveries.

Late deliveries were blamed by Gen. Sharpe for overcoat and short coat shortages. He insisted that there is no shoe shortage.

Senator Hitchcock, reading from the quartermaster general's annual report, said it appeared that 2,000,000 overcoats were on hand and only 1,300,000 men in the army.

SLOW SHIPBUILDING BLAMED ON NAVY

Chairman Hurley Says Fighting Branch Controls Most of Countries Facilities.

HAD TO ERECT NEW YARDS

The Navy's utilization of much of the country's shipbuilding facilities was cited by Chairman Hurley of the shipping board today as one reason for the slow progress of merchant ship construction.

Testifying in the Senate commerce committee's investigation into the progress of the shipbuilding program, Mr. Hurley declared that the fact that the Navy at the outbreak of the war controlled 70 per cent of the building facilities of eighteen prominent shipyards forced the shipping board to have new yards built.

Continual reorganization of the board's Emergency Fleet Corporation was explained by Mr. Hurley as necessary to make the corporation responsive to the demands made upon it.

Expands to Avoid Delay.

"As the pressure of our organization has increased," said Mr. Hurley, "we have subdivided functions and added departments, and we are at present engaged in a further scheme of expansion, so that annoying delays and errors of the past may be avoided in the future."

Delay in turning out ships, Mr. Hurley said, was in part attributable to the small capacity of American shipyards.

"The task of the fleet corporation," he said, "is not only the construction of new ships, but more particularly the fabrication of new facilities, and the construction of new yards."

With the tremendous expansion of the industry, with the relatively few experienced organizations available, and the relatively small number of workmen heretofore engaged in shipbuilding, some time must be granted for the proper expansion and development of the necessary labor and directing forces to man the newly created facilities.

Output Will Increase.

"It is hardly fair to say that the newly created facilities shall from the very day they have been put into operation produce ships at maximum capacity. The output will increase progressively as experience grows and man power is increased."

The work now far has been in many cases preparatory and it has carried with it the usual amount of annoyance and disappointments, but the period of preparation is getting rapidly behind us and the period of actual ship construction in full accordance with our plans is immediately before us."

ASKS \$120,970 DAMAGES OF FLEET CORPORATION

National Timber Company Says Contract Was Canceled Without Legal Excuse.

The United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation is named as defendant in a suit to recover \$120,970 in damages for alleged breach of contract filed today in the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia by Maurice H. Eichberger of Mobile, Ala., trading as the National Timber Company.

The suit is said to grow out of the decision of the shipping board to substitute steel for lumber in the proposed wooden ships for the emergency fleet.

Ernest W. Roberts, former representative in Congress from Massachusetts, and Attorney John B. Daish of the local bar represent the plaintiff.

According to the declaration the plaintiff at the request of the defendant submitted, August 2 last, a written proposal to furnish about 4,000,000 feet of lumber and the offer was accepted, it is stated. Two weeks later, after he had spent more than \$3,000 in connection with the contract, Mr. Eichberger says the contract was canceled by the fleet corporation without any legal excuse.

NEW YORK MARKET. NEW YORK, December 21.—Metal exchange quiet. Lead firm, spot, 6.60; futures, 6.60; tin, spot, 7.50; futures, 7.50; copper, spot, 1.10; futures, 1.10; electrolytic, 1.12; tin, spot, 3.08; futures, 3.08; lead, spot, 1.00; futures, 1.00; spelter, spot, 1.10; futures, 1.10.

LIGHT ORDER IGNORED.

Some New York City Sections Brilliant, But White Way Is Dark.

NEW YORK, December 21.—While Broadway's famed lights have been darkened under the "lightless night" edict, the order has not been uniformly observed in other parts of New York, and it was said today that vigorous action would be taken by fuel administrators against the offenders.

At Columbus Circle, in upper Broadway and at places on other streets, electric lights blazed with their usual brilliance last night, but "the gay white way" was shrouded in gloom.

A Good Habit

The Star is read in the homes of practically every worth-while family in Washington.

YESTERDAY'S CIRCULATION:

Thursday, Dec. 20...97,924

Same day last year...80,168

Gain...17,756

The home circulation of The Star is greater than the home circulation of all the other Washington newspapers combined.



DRINK-MAD SOLDIERS SPREAD REIGN OF TERROR IN RUSSIA

Liquor Maniacs Seize Wines in Royal Cellars at Petrograd, While Troops Sent to Curb Orgy Join Debauch.

BY LEWIS EDGAR BROWNE.

Cablegram to The Evening Star and the Chicago Daily News.

Copyright, 1917.

PETROGRAD, Russia, December 19 (delayed).—For ten days Petrograd has been in the grip of a drunken orgy. Most of the wine cellars of the city have been looted, and crazed soldiers are now in possession of the government stores of raw spirits. At 3 o'clock this morning martial law was declared and armored cars patrol the streets under orders to use machine guns without warning on the crowds near the alcohol stores.

The rattle of machine guns has been heard all night, and soldiers are seen everywhere. The soldiers are now in possession of the government stores of raw spirits. At 3 o'clock this morning martial law was declared and armored cars patrol the streets under orders to use machine guns without warning on the crowds near the alcohol stores.

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CHARGES REFINERS COULD RAISE PRICES

Senator Reed's Accusation Is Denied by G. M. Rolph, Sugar Director.

HOOVER TESTIMONY CITED

Charges that the food administration gave the refiners a chance to combine to fix purchasing and refining prices were made by Chairman Reed of the Senate sugar investigating committee today and emphatically denied by George M. Rolph, director of the sugar division of the food administration. The Attorney General agreed to the plan before it was put into operation, he added.

"These refiners met and agreed they would buy only through one committee which would control the supply and fix a 'good fat price' for their refining work," said Senator Reed.

"Why didn't you arrange to buy the Cuban sugar and then go to the refiners and say that the one that bids the lowest for refining gets the work?"

"We didn't have the power, but I approve of a fixed refining price, as without it some refiners would have all the supplies and others nothing," replied Rolph.

Denies He Represented Firm.

Mr. Rolph denied that he represented the company for which he is general manager, but was representative of the people, when Senator Reed asked if the people were represented at the refiners' meeting. He said that the investigation of the food administration.

Did you say in effect to those refiners that they could not go above a certain figure?" Reed questioned.

"Yes, they knew the food administration would not accept an exorbitant price."

Prohibition today was added to the causes for the present shortage. Rolph said that consumption had been increased in the south by soldiers who drink more soft drinks, chew more gum and eat more candy than they did before the war. They could procure liquor. This was one of the offsetting factors of conservation.

Complaints of Delay.

An inferential charge by George H. Rolph of the sugar committee of the United States food administration at the sugar investigation today that delay in the inquiry is keeping members of the administration from devoting time to solve the eastern problem drew from Chairman Reed the statement that no member of the administration had been in the vicinity of Hartmann-Weilkerkopf and east of Thann.

A heavy bombardment in Lorraine and a strong German attack against the French trenches north of Beilions was repulsed, according to the war office announcement last night.

In Upper Alsace the French repulsed a serious surprise attack which the enemy attempted against our positions at Gluckersdorf, southeast of Altkirch.

British Front Quiet.

LONDON, December 21.—Today's official communication says there is nothing of interest to report.

The official report from Field Marshal Haig's headquarters last night said:

"The enemy raided one of our posts early this morning northeast of Harcourt, and this afternoon, under cover of fog, succeeded in capturing one of our advanced posts east of Mesmines. Other hostile raiding parties attempted to approach our lines during the day, but were repulsed. The enemy is now in the possession of Mesmines and north of the Meuse road, but were driven off by our fire. We captured a few prisoners and a machine gun."

Airplanes Make Raids.

A British official statement today says that naval aircraft dropped quantities of explosives on works at Bruges Tuesday night, getting direct hits. Large fires resulted. Airplanes also bombed the Vilseghem airfield yesterday, securing direct hits. One enemy machine was destroyed and another driven down. One British machine failed to return.

The British war office last night issued the following statement on aviation activities in France:

"Three hostile machines were brought down in air fighting Wednesday, and two others were driven down out of control. One of our machines is missing."

MONUMENT FUND IS STARTED.

Nancy to Honor American Soldiers Buried in That City.

Cablegram to The Evening Star and Chicago Daily News. Copyright, 1917.

WITH THE AMERICAN ARMY IN FRANCE, December 21.—The city of Nancy, which has been "adopted" by Philadelphia, has started a fund to erect monuments on the tombs of the American soldiers who fell while our troops were holding a part of the front line. They are buried in graves marked by wooden crosses in a shell-swept corner a short distance back of the trenches, where they laid down their lives.

The municipal council of Nancy has called upon all the citizens to subscribe. It is said that Mayor Williams was determined to have that city, and falling in his ambition, has been harassing the inhabitants with regular air raids.

150 PROPAGANDISTS HELD.

ST. LOUIS, Mo., December 21.—More than 150 pro-German propagandists have been arrested during the last two months in southern Illinois, where they have been active among coal miners, according to government agents who reported to headquarters here today.

According to the reports, rumors of the activity of German propagandists came to federal officials late in the summer, and government agents were sent to the mining camps, the result being the arrest and detention of scores of persons who are charged with inciting riots and strikes among the miners.

Gift Apples for Boys "Over There."

ST. LOUIS, Mo., December 21.—American soldiers in France soon will receive a shipment of 300,000 Missouri apples, the gift of produce dealers of St. Louis. Assembling of the apples was completed today, and it was announced that the shipment would go forward as soon as transportation can be arranged.

GERMANS REJECT RUSS PEACE TERMS,

SAYS REED REPORT

Van Kuehlmann Leaves Berlin for Brest-Litovsk—Turk to Preside Over Negotiations.

"BRING US STRONG PEACE," TEUTON PEOPLE SHOUT

Kaiser Authorizes Move Toward Ending War, Chancellor von Hertling Tells Reichstag Members.

TERMS RIDICULED; RUSS WITHDRAW

Cablegram to The Evening Star and Chicago Daily News. Copyright, 1917.

PETROGRAD, December 21.—There is an unconfirmed report here that the Brest-Litovsk peace conference has terminated in a quarrel.

It is said that the Germans ridiculed Russia's peace terms, whereupon the Russian delegation was recalled.

By the Associated Press.

LONDON, December 21.—It is reported unofficially that the Germans have rejected the Russian peace terms, the Petrograd correspondent of the Exchange Telegraph Company wires, under date of Thursday.

Dr. Richard von Kuehlmann, the German foreign secretary, with an important staff of officials, left Berlin yesterday for Brest-Litovsk, amid scenes of enthusiasm, the crowd singing the national anthem and raising shouts of "Bring us a strong peace."

It is said that the peace negotiations will be under the presidency of Ibrahim Hakki Pasha, the Turkish ambassador to Berlin, and dean of the Reichstag diplomatic corps. The Bulgarian delegates include Minister of Justice Popoff and M. Kossuff, chief of the foreign office.

Heart-Burnings Caused.

While the peace delegates are assembling the activity at Petrograd of a number of German agents, apparently causing heart-burnings among the Russian delegates, is being spread. Circulars have been spread alleging that the council of soldiers' and workmen's delegates is in negotiation with the officers. The Pravda, the Bolshevik newspaper, is claiming to understand the situation. The Bolsheviks are making a counter charge against the constitutional democrats, claiming that they are trying to undermine the peace negotiations.

The Pravda further appeals to the workmen to defeat the attempt of the constitutional democrats to place Russia under the control of German imperialism. The Bolsheviks also accuse the constitutional democrats of being responsible for the looting of wine-shops, which caused serious riots in Petrograd, and claim the possession of documentary evidence, which they threaten to publish later.

Kaiser Authorizes Peace.

AMSTERDAM, December 21.—Count von Hertling, the imperial German chancellor, yesterday received representatives of the peace negotiators with whom he had a confidential discussion on the situation caused by the opening of peace negotiations with Russia.

The chancellor announced, according to a Berlin official dispatch, that he had authorized him to conclude peace, and he had charged Foreign Secretary von Kuehlmann with the task of future negotiations were reviewed by the chancellor, and all the deputies are said to have approved the guiding lines laid down.

According to the newspapers the incident says that the staff of the Russian general peace conference is now in the first time since the foundation of the empire that it has had a direct course with the German government.

Czechs and Slavs Want Peace.

A dispatch received here from Vienna says that the Czechs and Slovaks, a small majority a resolution introduced by the Czechs and south Slavs in favor of general peace or a basis of no annexation or indemnities and for using Russia's good offices to convey a force of proposal to the entire governments.

Rumanians Have Joined Ukrainian Forces in War on Bolsheviki, Claim

By the Associated Press.

LONDON, December 21.—The Rumanians on the southwestern Russian front have joined the Ukrainian forces, according to a report received in Petrograd and transmitted by the Exchange Telegraph Company. The Bolsheviks and Ukrainian troops are reported to be working on each other, being three versts apart.

A Petrograd dispatch to the Daily News says that the staff of the Russian army on the Rumanian front has joined the Ukrainians, which report is declared to be more probable than the report that the Rumanians have taken such action. The Daily News reports confirms the report that the Rumanian commander, batches as the Ukrainian commander, has joined the Ukrainians.

Germans in Command.

A bolshevik force commanded by released German and Austrian officers, prisoners of war, has been reported to have taken the town of Tashkent, capital of Turkestan, according to a Petrograd dispatch to the Morning Post. The dispatch also says that it is believed that a force of released enemy prisoners equivalent to two army corps, commanded by German officers, is now within striking distance of Petrograd.

A dispatch to the Exchange Telegraph Company from Hapsburg reports that the German army is now marching against Moscow, while Grand Duke Nicholas has gathered a great army of royalists in the Caucasus.

Civil War Spreading.

The correspondents in Russia continue to report that the civil war is spreading to the maximum extent possible.

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